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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LUANDA 000740

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM PTER AO

SUBJECT: ANGOLA - SECOND, "DEFINITIVE" CEASE-FIRE SIGNED IN CABINDA

REF: A. LUANDA 00736

1B. LUANDA 00196

1C. LUANDA 00710

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CYNTHIA EFIRD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

Summary

11. (C) GRA and Cabinda Forum for Dialogue (FCD) military representatives signed the second and "definitive" cease-fire agreement on July 18, 2006 in Macabi, Cabinda province. While some of those opposed continue to publicly attack the peace accord, including a call by some Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) members for a referendum on Cabindan independence, outspoken FLEC President Nzita Tiago's son, Antonio Nzita Mbemba, was present as an observer at the negotiations in Brazzaville and at the ceremony in Cabinda. During a July 17-19 visit to Cabinda, EmbOff noted a "wait and see" attitude from the Cabindan people. While Cabindans are excited by the prospects of peace, it is results, such as infrastructure developments and a reduced military presence, that are more important to them than the actual accord. End Summary.

Final Cease-Fire Signed

12. (U) On July 18, 2006, General Sachipengo Nunda, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA), and General Mauricio Zulo, representing the military forces under the authority of the FCD, signed the second and "definitive" cease-fire in Macabi, Cabinda province (ref A). Witnesses to the signing were Minister of Territorial Administration Virgilio de Fontes Pereira, on behalf of the GRA, and President of the FCD Antonio Bento Bembe, on behalf of the FCD.

Opposition to the Accord Weakening?

13. (U) Also present at the signing ceremony was Antonio Nzita Mbemba, son of the FLEC President Nzita Tiago and Executive Secretary of the FCD (ref B). Given Tiago's opposition to Bembe's negotiations with the GRA, local press questioned Mbemba about his presence. In carefully chosen words, Mbemba said that he had been invited by friends "to observe" the negotiations in Brazzaville and the signing ceremony. When asked by reporters if he had his father's authorization to go to Brazzaville and Cabinda, he stated that his father knew where he was and that if the negotiations appeared serious his father may rethink his position. (Note: Both father and son currently live in France. End Note.)

14. (U) Others opposed to the accord have stayed the course. Mplabanda and Father Tati continue to deny that the

negotiations and the Memorandum of Understanding have legitimacy without the involvement of the Catholic Church and civil society (ref C). Various members of FLEC upset by the accord called on the GRA to hold a referendum on Cabindan independence. In a July 15, 2006 Lusa article, FLEC's Director of External Relations Joel Batila said that the Cabindan peace accord was a "game" and that given the human rights abuses in Cabinda this peace process should not be handled by the GRA, but by the United Nations, the African Union, and the international community.

"Wait and See" Attitude

¶15. (U) A previously scheduled July 17-19, 2006 EmbOff visit to Cabinda focused on economic issues (septel) allowed the Embassy some on-the-ground insight. Cabinda city, the capital of the province, was covered in GRA billboards and banners proclaiming peace, reconstruction, and development. Most Cabindans, while excited about the possibility of peace, questioned the GRA willingness to carry out the promises in the accord. Many of them specifically mentioned that results, such as the building of a new port or the reduction of military forces, were more important than the actual accord. Recent Radio Ecclesia commentary also noted that while the youth of Cabinda were excited, older generations remained skeptical.

Comment - Cabindans Want Results, not Rhetoric

¶16. (C) Given the decision to hold the official signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Namibe province, this ceremony publicly placed Cabinda as home to one of the three major signings. The attitude of the average Cabindan seems to be

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less concerned who was involved in the peace process, contrary to assertions by those opposing the accord, and more concerned that the GRA fulfills its end of the bargain. For Cabindans, the economic development of Cabinda is central to ensuring the long-term viability of this accord. The GRA will continue to court those still in opposition. Tiago's decision to allow his son, Mbemba, to observe negotiations, which Tiago had previously denied existed, indicates that Tiago wants to make sure he can still be a part of the deal.

¶17. (C) Comment continued: No date has been set for the official signing ceremony. On July 17, 2006, President dos Santos attended the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CLCP) Summit in Guinea Bissau and is now on holidays in Spain, where he will have his annual ophthalmology appointment. According to the Czech Charge d'Affaires, dos Santos will then go to the Czech Republic for routine dental work. The ceremony will likely not take place until his return. End Comment.

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